Bible Characters – David
(1 Samuel 16 to 2 Samuel) (also 1 Kings 1:1-2:12)
(also 1 Chronicles 9:35–12:40)

David is usually known as a young man who defeats the Philistine 'giant' Goliath. However, there is much more we can learn about David and his life. To get a more complete picture of David we have to look at all the battles he is involved in – and this – foremost in his often overlooked private and family life. Taking all of the external and internal challenges together, we realize the importance of surrendering to God in all areas of our lives. Indeed, it is God working in and through David that is among the most valuable lessons we can learn for ourselves.

As we read about David in the Bible, we realize that even before he is anointed king over Israel and defeats Goliath, there are already family dynamics at play. Not only is he overlooked by his own father (1 Samuel 16:11), but also dealt with harshly by his brother (1 Samuel 17:28-29). The Bible doesn't tell us why, but does reveal that it is so.

Later in life, he does not have many close friends – except for Jonathan (1 Samuel 20) and – through his own actions of disobedience – having an affair with another man's wife, leading him to commit murder (2 Samuel 11-12) this also causes the death of a child (2 Samuel 12:13-23). Having many wives and concubines does not help much either, and in one case in particular – his own son Absalom attempts to kill him (2 Samuel 15). This ends in his son's death as the events unfold, which causes David much grief and heartache (2 Samuel 18).

To conclude, while David was surrounded by struggles, hardship and evil – occurring both in his wars against pagan groups, and especially in his own personal and family life – it is his relationship with God that stands out. God calls him 'a man after His own heart,' (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22). While we see that David is far from perfect and God has to deal with acts of sin and disobedience in his life, we learn from David the importance of repentance. Despite the consequences of David's sins – which cause others pain, suffering, harm and death – we realize that behind this 'warrior-king' there is a heart bent towards God.

We can learn much more about this in the Psalms – many of which are by David – where he pours out his heart to God (for some great examples, see Psalm 18; 23; 51; and 86). This is where we observe a link to our Lord Jesus Christ, not only in the Davidic ancestry line (Matthew 1:6), but also when Jesus, as our perfect and obedient Good Shepherd, redeems us – by dying on the cross, he quotes the first verse of Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" (Matthew 27:46 NLT). As we repent, call out and surrender to our Lord Jesus – who died for our sins on the cross and rose from the dead three days later – my we let Jesus guide us (in humility and obedience) to help us in all matters of the heart at all times.

For further study:
Gardner P. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.

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